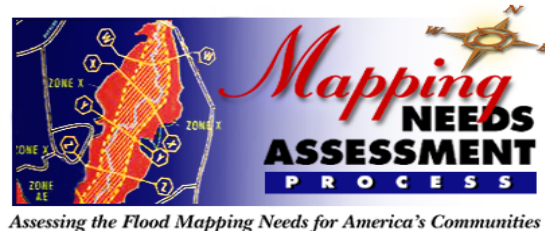




## FEMA's Flood Hazard Mapping Program Mapping Needs Assessment Process

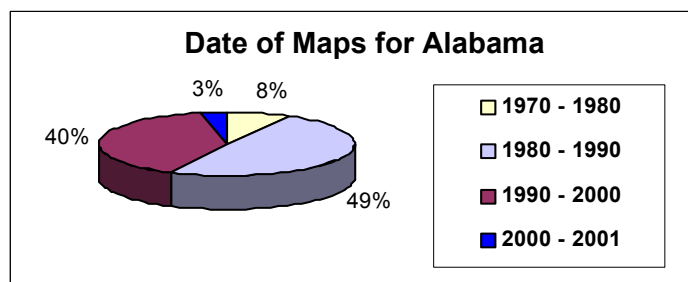


### Alabama State Profile

Fall 2001

**Alabama's Flood Insurance Rate Maps are aging.** Fifty-seven percent (57%) of the State's FIRMs are greater than 11 years old. The effect of the aging is that the maps may be outdated and as the maps get older, they may not reflect community development and the associated impact on flood hazards. Up-to-date flood maps will help guide floodplain management.

Flood hazard conditions are dynamic due to natural disasters and ongoing development. Development and other natural processes alter watershed and floodplain conditions such that the flood hazards depicted on the maps may no longer be reliable. It is possible that the older maps may no longer reflect the actual flood hazards, potentially creating a false sense of security and placing buildings, infrastructure, and people at risk.



### WHAT IS THE MAPPING NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROCESS?

- In Section 575 of the National Flood Insurance Reform Act of 1994, the U. S. Congress mandated the Director of FEMA to "...once during each 5-year period... assess the need to revise and update all floodplain areas and flood risk zones identified, delineated, or established under this section, based on an analysis of all natural hazards affecting flood risks..."
- The Mapping Needs Assessment process helps FEMA develop map update priorities and expend the flood mapping budget in the most cost-beneficial manner. The goal of the Mapping Needs Assessment process is to identify flood hazard mapping needs nationwide, maintain an inventory of those needs, and prioritize those needs across the country. This will ensure that we spend the limited funding on communities that would benefit the most.

### HOW IS THE MAPPING NEEDS DATA STORED?

- Flood hazard mapping needs data is stored in the Mapping Needs Update Support System (MNUSS) database. MNUSS is a software application that contains an inventory of flood hazard mapping needs and performs benefit-cost calculations to rank communities, on a National, Regional, and State level. Currently, ranking is done on an individual community basis (e.g., cities, towns, villages, and unincorporated counties that have land use authority), and is based upon the benefit points calculated for each community. Benefit points are a quantitative comparison of the benefits of addressing a community's cumulative mapping needs to the costs of revising the community's map.

### ALABAMA'S TOP 5 RANKED COMMUNITIES: FACTS AND FIGURES FROM MNUSS

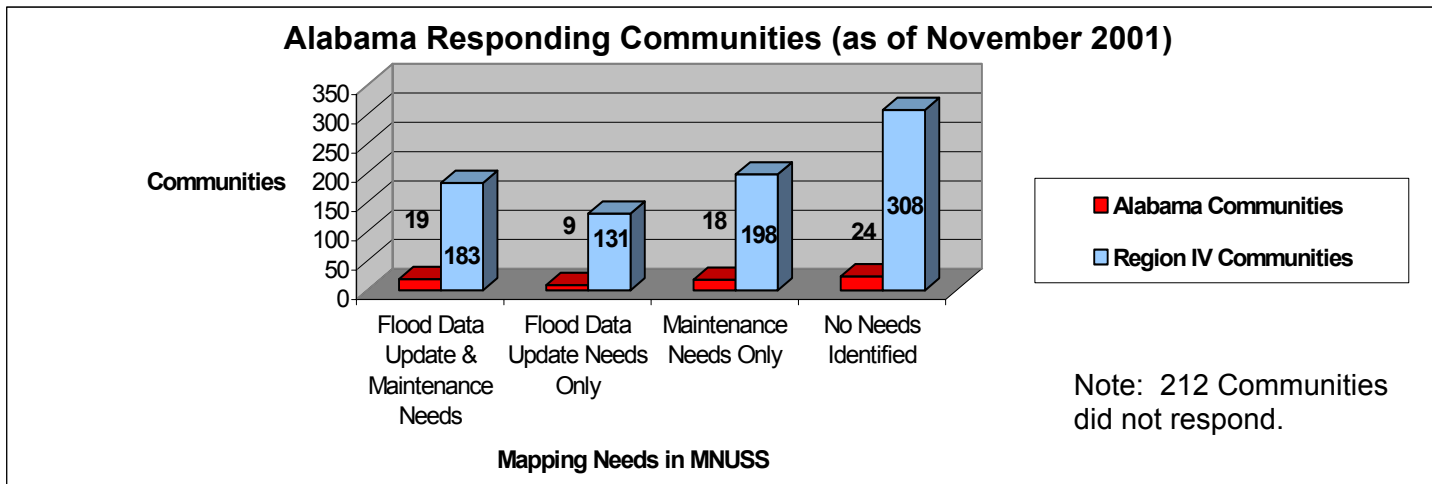
State Ranking	Community	Flood Study Update Needs	Maintenance Needs	Area Sq. Mile	1998 Population Estimate	Number of Flood Insurance Policies
1	RIVERSIDE, TOWN OF	2	1	7.96	1,422	31
2	SHELBY COUNTY*	12	0	813.30	63,616	185
3	FAIRHOPE, CITY OF	0	3	7.70	12,734	177
4	MADISON, CITY OF	3	0	20.01	25,400	117
5	TALLASSEE, CITY OF	1	0	19.27	10,594	2

If you have questions, or you would like to become involved with assessing and collecting mapping needs, or you need additional information concerning access to MNUSS, please contact the FEMA National Mapping Needs Assessment Manager at (202) 646-3458 or by [e-mail](#) or your FEMA Regional Engineer or Specialist.

---

## WHAT DATA HAS BEEN COLLECTED FOR NFIP COMMUNITIES IN ALABAMA?

Approximately 282 mapped NFIP communities in the State of Alabama were contacted by FEMA during the 1994-1999 period and 70 (25%) of those communities responded. Flood mapping needs are categorized as either flood data update needs (i.e., changes to the floodplain and/or watershed) or maintenance needs (i.e., non-engineering reference features, such as adding streets to panels or changing corporate limits). Some communities indicated no updates to their maps are needed.



---

## UNMAPPED COMMUNITIES

FEMA has made significant progress in mapping and converting previously unstudied communities to the Regular Phase of the NFIP; however, there are approximately 6,000 communities nationwide for which no determination has been made by FEMA as to whether or not they should be mapped. In addition, many communities have become newly incorporated in recent years, or are small, rural communities and may not have the authority to adopt and enforce floodplain management ordinances. Communities such as these, therefore, have not been mapped separately and are shown on the county map. FEMA's Mapping Needs Assessment Development Team, in collaboration with the FEMA Map Service Center, is preparing a comprehensive list of these communities in the United States. This project will support both the MNUSS application and the FEMA Flood Map Store, the Agency's e-commerce site <http://www.msc.fema.gov>. Once the list has been prepared and the communities mapping needs, if any, are identified, their needs can then be prioritized.

---

## BIENNIAL REPORT

It is anticipated that the Biennial Report will be distributed to NFIP communities during calendar year 2002. Communities will be able to complete and submit the report, electronically, or return it in hardcopy format. It is important that the communities complete the form as accurately as possible because FEMA will use this information in a myriad of ways, such as: identifying communities that need to be re-mapped or have additional flood hazards, developing mapping priorities, identifying communities that need technical assistance or have training needs, and providing qualitative data that FEMA can use to develop priorities and evaluate national progress in floodplain management. In addition, FEMA may be contacting communities for clarification or elaboration of the information provided in the Biennial Report.